

CLAIMS

1. A billing method in a communication network including an information provider server device, a plurality of user terminals which receive information from said server device and a transfer device for routing information transmission between said server device and said user terminals; wherein said ^{method} transfer device comprises:

a step of recording billing management information for identifying server devices which are to be subject to IP billing which is billing with respect to information providers;

10 a step of detecting a network address of said server device designated when said user terminal receives an information transmission from said server device;

a step of determining whether or not said server device is to be subject to IP billing based on the detected network address and said billing management information; and

15 a step of performing a billing procedure with respect to the information provider which performed the information transmission if said server device is determined to be subject to IP billing.

2. A billing method as recited in claim 1, wherein said transfer device does not route an information transmission if it is determined not to be subject to IP billing.

3. A billing method as in claim 1, wherein said transfer device performs a billing procedure with respect to users who have received the information transmission if it is determined not to be subject to IP billing.

10
15

said transfer device comprises:

10

15

20

6. A billing method in a communication network including an information provider server device, a plurality of user terminals which receive information from said server device and a transfer device for routing information transmission between said server device and said user terminals; wherein said transfer device comprises:

a mailbox for mediating push-type information transmission that is subject to IP billing which is billing with respect to the information provider;

and comprises:

a step of storing in said mailbox information mail sent from said server device

5 designating a desired destination and the address of said mailbox;

a step of transmitting the information mail stored in said mailbox to user terminals which are the designated destinations; and

a step of performing a billing procedure with respect to the information provider which offered said information transmission with respect to push-type transmission services through said mailbox.

10

7. A billing method in a communication network including an information provider server device, a plurality of user terminals which receive information from said server device and a transfer device for routing information transmission between said server device and said user terminals; wherein said transfer device comprises:

15

an IP-billed mailbox for mediating push-type information transmission that is subject to IP billing which is billing with respect to the information provider; and

a user-billed mailbox for mediating information transmission that is not subject to IP billing;

20

and performs a billing procedure with respect to the information provider which offered said information transmission with respect to push-type information transmission services through said IP-billed mailbox; and

a step of performing a billing procedure with respect to the user that received said information transmission with respect to information transmission services through

0069274353
Contd

said user-billed mailbox.

8. A billing method as in any one of claims 1-7, wherein the object of said billing is a communication fee with respect to communication services for the information transmission.

9. A billing method as in any one of claims 1-7, wherein the object of said billing is an information fee with respect to information provided by the information transmission.

10. A billing method as in claim 9, wherein said transfer device performs a billing procedure of information fees with respect to users if it is determined as not being subject to IP-billing, and otherwise does not perform a billing procedure of information fees.

11. A billing method as in any one of claims 1-7, characterized in that said server device belongs to a first communication network following a first communication protocol and said plurality of user terminals belong to a second communication network following a second communication protocol different from that of said first communication network; and

said transfer device is a gateway for converting between said first and second communication protocols and routing information transmissions.

12. A billing method as in claim 11, wherein said second communication network

is a local network accommodating specific user terminals; and

said first information communication network is a global network
interconnecting information resources such as said server device assigned identification
information for identifying an absolute network address.

13. A billing method as in claim 12, wherein said second communication network
is a mobile communication network accommodating a plurality of user terminals which
are mobile terminals, and

said first information communication network is the Internet.

add
a2

006000" 6490660

a1
Cond